

How to Take Notes from Your Textbook

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with several different options for taking notes out of your textbook. It is my hope that one of these techniques will work well for the manner in which you learn and retain information. I encourage you to use each of these techniques until you find one that works for you. For the remainder of the year, you will be required to take notes from assigned readings according to one of the following techniques. Remember; never write your notes out in complete sentences. Always condense the information into your own words.

Note Taking Techniques Included in this Handout:

- 1) SQ3R
- 2) T-Chart
- 3) Cluster/ Word Web
- 4) Two Column Notes
- 5) Outline

Headings for Your Notes:

Before beginning your notes you must create a heading. This heading should include the chapter number, section number and title, date, and assigned question numbers. How you format this information is entirely up to you, just make sure it is readily available at the top of the page. Also, your notes should be on an entirely new page in your notebook, separate from your class notes.

Tips for Answering End of Section Questions (these are done after you have completed one of the above note taking techniques):

- 1) Preview end of section questions prior to reading, however DO NOT attempt to answer the questions before you have read the ENTIRE section. Merely locating the answers without having read the material prevents you from understanding the material in context.
- 2) Physically write out each question in your notes before answering it.
- 3) For vocabulary terms, DO NOT use the glossary. Use the definition and explanation found in the section. Attempt to explain the term within the context of the content in the section (think who, what, when, where, why).
- 4) For short answer, again write out the entire question. Answer the question in complete sentences and refer back to the text to support your answer.
- 5) For each answer, write down the page number(s) where you found the information so that you may refer back to the text during class discussions or while studying.

Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R)

A five step process can be used to help students to understand and learn concepts presented in informational texts. The strategy is more effective if the text is organized into sections with headings and subheadings.

1) Survey: Develop a sense of the topic of the text	Survey these things: Title Headings & subheadings Pictures, charts, illustrations, captions Reading aids (bold faced terms & questions) Introductory & concluding notes
2) Question: Frame questions the text will answer	Before you read the section, do these things: Turn the heading or subheadings for the section into a question Write your questions on the left-handed side of a piece of paper
3) Read: Read the section, stopping after each section	As you read the section, do these things: Look for the answers to your question. Write the answers on the right side of the paper next to the question Slow your reading speed for difficult parts Stop and reread parts that aren't clear Look for the main ideas
4) Recite: Assimilate and learn the information read	After you read the section, do these things: Cover the answers you wrote. Answer the questions from memory If you can't remember the answers, reread the part of the section that has that answer
5) Review: Complete this step after you read the entire section. It will help you to recall the information, because memory is strengthened through repetition	After you have read the entire text, do these things: Review all of your questions. Try to recite the answers from memory To find an answer that you cannot recall, reread the appropriate section of the chapter. Recite the answer.

T-Chart

This form of note taking will help you to limit the information that you record to the most essential ideas. This technique is especially good for students who find that they are writing down almost everything that they have read.

Steps:

- 1) Establish what you already know about the subject and what questions you have about the subject.
- 2) Survey the section taking time to review any main ideas, bold faced paragraph titles, bold faced terms, and the end of section questions.
- 3) Read the section word for word, do not take any notes just yet.
- 4) After you have read the section, in the left margin, using only 1-2 words, record the main ideas/concepts from each bold headed paragraph. In your chart, you will have 1 main idea for each bold faced paragraph in the assigned reading.
- 5) In the right margin, write up to 3 details or examples which support your main ideas. These details could be dates, key terms, and/or key facts.
- 6) Answer any assigned end of section questions below your T-Chart

Example:

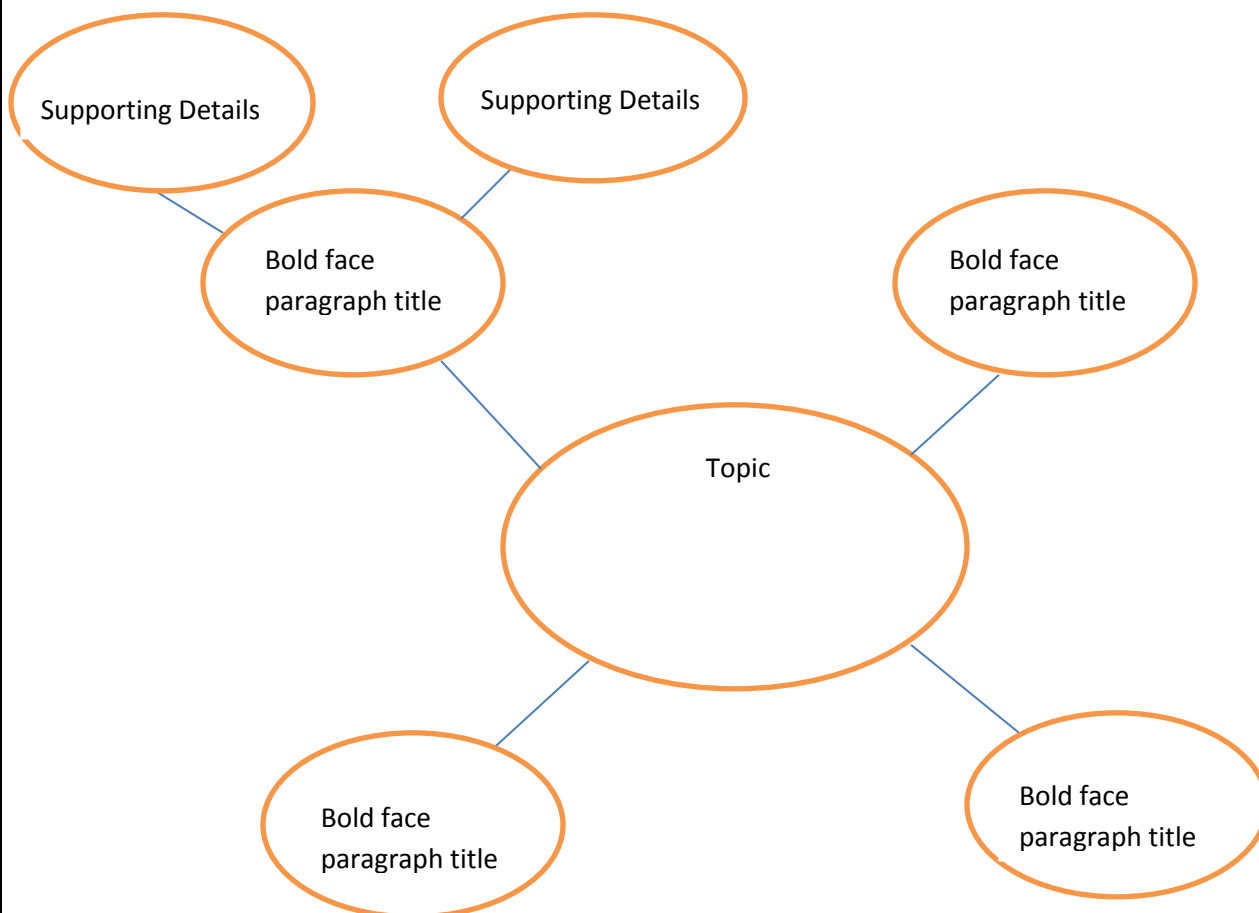
What I know	What I want to know/ questions

Main Ideas	Details/ Examples
1.	A. B. C.
2.	A. B. C.
3.	A. B. C.

Cluster/ Word Web

This form of note taking may benefit students who are visual learners, as it involves laying notes out in a graphic web format.

- 1) Begin by surveying the section taking time to review any main ideas, bold faced paragraph titles, bold faced terms, and the end of section questions.
- 2) Write the main topic of the section in the center of your paper.
- 3) Write the bold faced paragraph titles in smaller circles spreading out and around the main topic in the center of the paper.
- 4) Add supporting details and specific factual information in even smaller circles around the outer edge of the paper. Do not write complete sentences, instead paraphrase the information.



Two Column Notes

Taking notes in this technique will be especially helpful when it comes to studying by folding the paper in half vertically, reciting the answers to the questions and then checking your response for correctness.

The format below combines several of the other techniques already discussed earlier in this handout. You should select several of the row options depending upon the type of reading that has been assigned (please note- you should not complete all of the rows for the typical homework reading):

Select 1- 3 of these row options for your note taking



Column 1	Column 2
Headings from the text	Key words/ phrases (limit to one per heading listed on the left)
Key words	Explanations of key words
Main Ideas	Details
Concluding thoughts about the reading	Supporting details
Problems	Solutions
Questions that you have while reading	Reflections on meaning/ connections you can make
Causes	Effects
Predictions	Verifications
Quotations	Responses
Opinions	Proof/ Evidence
Hypothesis	Proof/ Evidence

Outline

The outline system is one of the more traditional and straight forward techniques for taking notes from textual readings. The flaw with this form of note taking is that the note taker must be disciplined enough to limit the amount of information which is recorded. Keep in mind that information must be paraphrased and summarized in your own words and that there should be between 1-2 supporting details for each subsection. Main ideas should be summarized in your own words.

Follow the format below:

I. Section Heading

A. First subsection heading

1. Main idea (in your own words)
2. Main idea
 - a. Supporting fact (may come directly from text)
 - b. Supporting fact

B. Second subsection heading

1. Main idea (in your own words)
2. Main idea
 - a. Supporting fact (may come directly from text)
 - b. Supporting fact

II. Section Heading

A. First subsection heading

1. Main idea (in your own words)
2. Main idea
 - a. Supporting fact (may come directly from text)
 - b. Supporting fact

B. Second subsection heading

1. Main idea (in your own words)
2. Main idea
 - a. Supporting fact (may come directly from text)
 - b. Supporting fact